



Betty Purnell ( Osborne )

I lived in the next street to Nana and Pop for my first 11 years then moved to York Street, diagonally opposite, then when I married, really opposite – next door to my mother and father and opposite my grandparents. I saw everyone every day until I moved to Greenwich when I turned 30. Other families lived very close, the Slenders, Martyns, the 3 Woods boys and the Goodacres. We were really a commune and Nana and Pop's house was the center of the Universe.

They were a remarkable couple, absolutely devoted to each other, I never heard Nana say a cross word or criticize Pop. She would only drive in a car with him. She was gentle, but not a cuddly Grandma, I suppose there were so many of us. I don't think she even learned all her grandchildren's names; she called us all " child dear ".

I never heard Pop raise his voice either except in hearty laughter. He was a great joke teller and very gregarious. I'm sure he must have had a strong side to his personality in business. He was stubborn if he thought he was right.

When I was about 9 Nana and Pop took me with them when they drove to the North Coast, Bangalow and Lismore to stay with Nana's sister on a beautiful dairy farm. In those days the Pacific Highway was a windy, rough, dirt road that went through private properties and my job was to open and close all the gates and do the shopping in the little towns. Nana didn't go into shops. I'd buy the bread, tomatoes and milk etc and we ate by the side of the road. It took 3 days.

There were not many bridges over the coastal rivers and cars had to use the punts. It was great if you were at the head of the queue but if you were 5 or 6 back when you drove off you had to drive through the dust that rose. Nana didn't like that at all. She'd say " Come on Daddy dear, we don't need this dust " and Pop would crash through the gears and work his way up to lead the way. Looking back, I think he was quite dangerous; he was really a pretty rough driver.

Pop was a pioneer in the motor business; he started his carrying business with horses and carts and then converted to motors. He owned lots of cars, all makes and models, but he never owned a brand new car. I remember a huge Studebaker tourer, an Armstrong Sidley, a big square Buick sedan and a tiny hoodless Citroen sports car with a pointed back, in which he hooted around Fairfield, waving madly to everyone.

Pop was Grand Master of the Lodge and used to go to many dinners and balls. He used to dance but Nana didn't. Nana used to go out in a long navy blue lace dress and always came home with a bouquet or basket of flowers as the Grand Master's wife. Often there were roses

in the bunch and Pop and I knew all the names of the roses in his big rose garden. It was in the back yard and he grew beautiful flowers. If there was a new rose in Nana's bunch I would take it and ride my bike over to De Freitas's Nursery at Carramar on the creek and Mr. De Freitas would order one for Pop, he called me the "Rose expert". Pop's back yard had a couple of plum trees and a vegetable garden, where he grew beans and a chook yard. There was a huge fig tree in the side yard. The fig tree was very messy with dropped fruit and huge leaves. Davey cut it down while Nana and Pop were in Ireland and told Pop it blew over in a storm.

I said Nana didn't shop – everybody delivered and came to the house – butcher, baker, iceman, fruit and greens. Glan Martyn had a grocery shop up the street, her girls made her clothes and the Bowtell girls made hats. The only thing she had to shop for were shoes and someone would drive her to Downes shoe shop.

Nana used to cook scones and apple pies continuously. I don't think the teapot was ever cold. The office for the "firm" was in the back room in the house and as every driver came in Nana would give them a hot scone or muffin cake and a cuppa. I have memories of a row of kids sitting on a long form against the kitchen table having lunch in the school holidays. Dorothy and Ronnie Slender, Shirley and the Martyn boys, maybe 6 or 7 of us, eating Golden Syrup sandwiches.

Pop always took Nana for a Sunday drive and often Mother and I would go too, we'd go to Wallacia or Hornsby to visit Aunt Jinny (Nana's sister Jane) or to the Botanical Gardens. Sometimes Aunt Guildford would come and if we went to the gardens she used to pick cuttings from shrubs. As young as I was I used to worry that she would get caught. Sunday driving was a very formal affair; we wore our church clothes, hat and gloves. and because we'd have a car full I used to sit in the middle in front, straddling the gear stick. Nana had a big handbag and on Sunday's she'd have all the weeks' takings from the firm in a calico bag in it, along with her hanky soaked in Eau de Cologne. This was just at my nose level and when she opened it the perfume nearly knocked me over. This is about my strongest memory.

When I was older, in my late teens Nana wasn't well and Pop had to go to a Lodge Ball, so he took me. There he was at the front door waiting for me in white tie and tails, looking absolutely splendid, he bowed and then pulled up a tail of his coat and wiped his nose. We both roared laughing and went off to the ball. He really was an old demon!

Nana used to knit socks for Pop but that was all she knitted. She used to sit on the front verandah in the afternoon and slice beans and if she had a lot she'd give a bagful to the neighbours as they went by.

They were a wonderful couple, very proud of their family, and you younger members of the family who don't remember or never met them, just know that they were something special. At Nana's funeral the Minister said Nana was "a breath of Irish Springtime". Pop died some time later. I think he couldn't live without her.

## Pop and the Flat Beer

This is a story told to me a long time ago by Pop and it is about one of his journeys from Sydney to Liverpool carrying freight on a horse drawn wagon.

On this occasion the horse became ill with the scours .That means the animal had dihorrhea. It became too weakened to keep pulling the loaded wagon and since there was no NRMA for horses Pop had to find another source of assistance.

This event had come to a head outside the Chullora pub and the sight of this place reminded Pop that someone had once told him that the best treatment for this ailment was to get the horse to drink a bucket of flat beer. Fortunately the pub was open so Pop went inside and approached the landlord, asking him if he had any flat beer in his establishment. The landlord took offence at this request and said indeed he did not.

At this point one of the patrons, who had overheard the conversation, asked Pop why he wanted flat beer. Pop told him about the sick horse and that he did not have the money for a bucket of fresh beer. The patron told pop he was a Doctor and directed the landlord to draw a bucket of fresh beer for the horse and that he would be happy to pay for it.

The landlord obliged and the horse drank the bucket of beer. The scours duly stopped but the horse was still too weak to continue so Pop spent the night on the ground under the wagon where it had stopped in the middle of the Hume Highway. By the next morning the horse had sufficiently recovered to allow the journey to be completed and Pop got home ok..

Pop told me this story about 50 years ago and it must have been at least 50 years earlier that this event had happened. At the time I got the impression that the thing of greatest significance to Pop was that the kind Doctor had put the stuffy landlord in his place by intervening on Pop's behalf otherwise the landlord would have turned Pop away.

Robert Martyn

I remember so little, although I can remember going to Nana and Pop's. Nana always had boiled lollies behind the kitchen door, in a cupboard with a sliding door. I don't think we saw heaps of them but I do remember that. Mum and Dad always spoke about how Nana used to beat a sponge cake whilst out in the garden, put it down and fiddle with the chickens etc. and then pick it up again some time later and beat it some more ( evidently not what you are supposed to do with a sponge ) and her sponges were always light and beautiful. I remember the large kitchen table and I took Mum and Dad there about 14 years ago and the owners of the house invited us in and that table was still there. Dad was so overwhelmed to see it there. I remember seeing the shaving strap hanging on the wall and the hole in the wall that Dad said was Pop's shortcut because there was no power in the bathroom and so he took power from the kitchen straight through the hole.

I remember seeing Nana in her front bedroom in bed, when she had died and I remember getting the phone call when Pop died.

I asked my aunt if she remembered how my Mum and Dad met. Well, they virtually grew up near each other in Fairfield and then went to dances at Wetherill Park. I know that Mum worked at Concord Hospital and Sydney Hospital when Dad was away at war. He went to Port Moresby and Canada with the Flying Shovels and he is still the Patron of that unit. He was a bomb aimer with them

Susan Booker ( Woods )

## Memories of David John Slender

**JJ Woods and sons yearly purchased new trucks and before WWII bought 2 new Ford Cab Chassis. I believe one for Uncle Max and one for Uncle Davey, and David John was credited with decorating Uncle Max's with a good coat of white wash..**

**At one time Dad (Bill ) and Mum (Isa ) along with Dorothy and Ron wanted to go out and enlisted the help of Uncle Billy Woods to babysit David John. This was in the house between Uncle Dave's and Auntie Vi's. This was the Slender home at the time and some will remember that the side verandah was quite high off the ground and was closed in to the top of the verandah rail with fibro.**

**After this one baby sitting adventure Uncle Billy would not babysit David John again. I am told he had trouble as David was able to move the cot around the verandah quite easily and while this was going on was able to unload the bedclothes as he moved. Uncle Billy was kept busy and eyes turned for a moment allowing enough time for dear David to unload all the bedclothes over the side of the verandah. On retrieving them he was greeted with David still in the cot with a packet of razor blades and was opening one.**

**Uncle Billy told me many years later he would not look after me again.**

**Scene : JJ Woods and Sons York St Depot - probably 1940 ish.**

**Pop displaying a worried look on his face and commenting that the petrol tanker had not arrived and the storage tank was empty.**

**In the background was David John, and hearing, this wondered what he could do. Being a young lad, he decided to play petrol truck driver. So what does a petrol truck driver do other than drive a truck? He connects some hoses together and finds a metal plate on the ground which has a lovely Shell design on it., then he unscrews a cap beneath it into which he puts the hose.**

**So, David finds a hose ( in those days the garden hose was not a shiny green plastic hose but a nice thick black hose ) and continues to play his game of petrol tanker driver. A fun game - removes that nice Shell embossed plate in the ground and unscrews the petrol cap and proceeds to deliver his "Petrol" into the tank. Result : one underground petrol tank is no longer empty.**

**Anyway David John was only playing.**

**The Woods family and the Slender family ( including David John ) occasionally went camping to Kangaroo Valley. At this time Pop Woods had a 1936 Ford V8 and while down there decided to do some tinkering with the motor. Of course David was very interested in the goings on and more so at the range of tools lined up on the**

running board, especially the long-nosed pliers. Not being mechanically minded, he decided that pliers were more suited to fitting Pop's behind as he was bending over. All that Pop said , with a laugh , was " You little scoundrel".

David John was always a very considerate lad, like the day Nana Woods came home from hospital after surgery and complained of being hot in her front bedroom at 26 York St.

David , being very sorry to hear this, decided he could do something nice for Nana and so, as a thoughtful lad, he put the hose on and sprayed her through the window to cool her down.

David John lives to this day !